

mondaine side of theatrical life, to which, given all his intercourse with Hortense Schneider, Zulma Bouffar, and others, he was the most competent of guides; men of fashion, who had wasted their best years and much of their money among the harlots of the Second Empire, told him tales of their experiences; he visited the house of one *belle impure* from basement to attic, and he supped at the house of another. Of the lower-class unfortunate he had, perforce, seen a good deal during his bohemian years in the Quartier Latin, and all observers of women of that category are aware that in most cases, though they may acquire some superficial polish on rising to wealth, their real natures undergo little change.

Zola's enemies naturally imputed the writing of "Nana" to his partiality for vice and scandal; but those who are acquainted with "L'Assommoir" will recognise that, in such a series as "Les Rougon-Macquart," a study of the courtesan was the necessary corollary of the study on drink and the general degradation of the working class. It is from, such homes as those of Coupeau and Gervaise that spring nine-tenths of the unhappy creatures so grimly denominated *filles de joie*. Nana's childhood and youth had already been recounted in "L'Assommoir," and it was certain that

Zola would not leave her there. How could lie
picture the
degenerescence of a period if he omitted the
harlot, who
had played—people hardly seem to recognise it
nowadays
—such a prominent, such a commanding part,
during the
years when Napoleon III. — dallying himself
with La
Castiglione, La Bellanger, and a dozen others,
while his
cousin Prince Napoleon Je*r6me kept the
notorious Cora
Pearl — had transformed the proud city of
Paris into the